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Committees  
Economic Development, Small  
Business and Regulatory Reform VC  
Families and Human Services VC  
Government Operations  
Health Policy

# The Jacobs Report

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Friday, August 27, 2004**

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## **BUDGET AGREEMENT CLOSE**

As August comes to an end, Granholm Administration officials and GOP legislative leaders hope for an impending announcement on a basic 2004-05 budget agreement. A compromise approved by both sides would clear the way for the Legislature to enact the final bills in early September.

While officials are hoping for an August resolution, there is also a chance that a final agreement may have to wait until September.

Even with an agreement pending, disagreements on the higher education budget are expected to persist, meaning that the final touches to the budget will be left for final negotiations between the executive office and the House/Senate conference committee.

The unresolved higher education issue concerns inflation rates. Last December, the state promised to repay a portion of university cuts if schools did not increase their tuition more than inflation. To the state's chagrin, some schools—notably Western Michigan University—are charging students higher fees in lieu of large tuition increases. Lawmakers are now faced with deciding what would be accepted as part of the tuition increase guarantee and how to account for large fee increases those schools are employing. The big question is, should schools like Western Michigan receive a return of state money just because their increased fees to students are—technically—not tuition increases?

## **MPSC ANNOUNCES SEPTEMBER CONSUMER FORUMS**

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) today announced that it will host a series of consumer forums around Michigan in September. The forums are designed to inform consumers about changes in the electric, natural gas and telephone industries.

MPSC Chair J. Peter Lark said a major focus of this year's forums will be the increase of wholesale natural gas prices and how the increase will affect monthly bills. "My fellow

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Commissioners and I are concerned about the impact of energy price increases on Michigan's citizens this coming winter," he said. "We believe it is important for utility customers to have time to prepare for winter energy bills and make informed decisions about available options. We welcome the opportunity to meet utility customers and hear their comments and concerns on these and other important utility issues."

Each consumer forum will include the latest information on electric and natural gas rates for the winter, opportunities to select an alternative electric or natural gas provider, and the status of local and long distance telephone service.

A Commissioner from the MPSC will be available at each forum to discuss these changes, explain how the Commission makes decisions and listen to questions and comments regarding utility service.

Following is information on each upcoming consumer forum, all of which begin at 6 p.m.:

**Detroit**

Thursday, Sept. 9  
Greater Grace Temple  
23500 W. Seven Mile Rd.

**Flint**

Tuesday, Sept. 14  
Flint Municipal Center/City Hall  
Dome Auditorium (southern end of complex)  
1101 South Saginaw St.

**Hancock**

Thursday, Sept. 16  
Lakeview Manor Community Room  
1401 W. Quincy St.

**Monroe**

Tuesday, Sept. 21  
City Hall – Council Chambers  
20 East First St.

**Muskegon**

Thursday, Sept. 23  
Grand Valley State University  
Michigan Alternative  
& Renewable Energy Center (multi-purpose room)  
200 Viridian Dr.

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**Benton Harbor**

Tuesday, Sept. 28

City Hall – Commission Chambers

200 East Wall Street

**Cheboygan**

Thursday, Sept. 30

City Hall- Council Chambers

403 North Huron St.

The MPSC is an agency within the Department of Labor & Economic Growth.

All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/> .

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

**Constituents of the 14<sup>th</sup> District may contact Senator Jacobs at [sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov) or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.**

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